

2008 Legislative Review

State Representative
Kirk Pearson
39th District

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Dear Friends:

I'm always happy to return home from the legislative session to spend time with my family and meet with constituents around the district. I am truly honored to serve as your local Representative. I hope this brief report outlining some of the successes and issues of this year's legislative session is helpful.

Some of the most notable achievements of this year's session locally were passage of my flood protection bill, funding for critical local projects and updates to our sex offender laws including passage of DNA database legislation. But, we also had some missed opportunities such as addressing DUI offenders.

This newsletter is a brief overview of the 2008 session. As always, I'm interested in your thoughts and comments. If I can be of service, please contact my district office. It's a pleasure to serve you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Kirk Pearson".

Rep. Kirk Pearson • District 39



Statewide flood protection bill passes

Working with families and local leaders, I introduced House Bill 2525 to make sure homeowners can take emergency action to protect their homes and property. House Bill 2525 increases the ability of landowners to take immediate emergency actions to protect land and structures in the event of a flood.



I have spent time with families in my district that have dealt with chronic flooding and I've seen first-hand the impact of a river washing away a home. This devastation is something I will never forget. This legislation will create the right balance between protecting our environment and safeguarding our homes.

Thank you to everyone who helped me get this bill passed and signed into law. This is a great policy for the state of Washington.

Representative Kirk Pearson • 39th District

Capital budget includes local funding



I'm pleased to say that this year's capital budget included funding for important local projects in the 39th District. The projects varied from the Bullerville PUD water system near Marblemount to the continuation of the Skykomish community oil clean up. These projects and others

highlighted our state's commitment to provide help to rural communities.

Elk damage reimbursement would help families

My legislation, House Bill 2524, which would reimburse property owners for costs related to the unmanaged elk in Skagit County ran up against opposition this year. I introduced the bill because of the many constituent complaints that large herds of elk under the management of the Department of Fish and Wildlife are creating a situation where farms, grazing land and crops in Skagit County are being damaged and even destroyed.



The cost to private property owners for repair of fences and to buy feed for domestic animals is increasing as the herd grows. This is causing serious financial difficulties for our farmers and other landowners. Our families cannot afford to pay for costly repairs that are avoidable. I plan to introduce this legislation again next year.

A victory for voters

Folks want the ability to choose the best person for the job, not between political parties. That's why I'm happy that the United States Supreme Court upheld the "top two" primary in Washington. I believe this ruling shows the wisdom of our highest court and affirms that voters have the right to choose who they think is most fit to hold office, regardless of party. This ruling makes sure voters can pick the candidate they support without declaring a party.

Critical public safety laws approved

As the minority leader on the public safety committee, many of you know one of my top priorities is making sure we have safe communities. I was pleased that House Bill 2713 was passed into law this year. It creates a statewide DNA database of people convicted of sex crimes or crimes considered by experts to be precursors to sex crimes. This bill is a proactive step to help our law enforcement community.



Another bill I worked on this year, House Bill 2786, passed. This bill will allow for Level 1 sex offenders guilty of failing to maintain their required address

registration to be placed on the statewide sex offender notification Web site. This is critical because sex offenders who don't want law enforcement or the public to know where they live are the ones we worry about the most.

I am also pleased to report that \$5 million was included in the budget to help law enforcement verify sex offender registration information. These are positive steps, but we have more work to do next year to continue updating our laws to better protect families.



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New law helps victims of ID theft

Legislation I sponsored this year gives victims of identity theft a much-needed tool. As passed, the law will ensure creditors can more easily submit proof of the crime to Washington courts.

House Bill 2637 allows records provided by out-of-state businesses and credit card companies to be authenticated by affidavit rather than in person in criminal cases. Making sure victims have the proof they need to prosecute the people accused of stealing their identity and to get their credit repaired is critical.



Missed opportunity on DUI protocol bill

Last year I sponsored House Bill 1340 which would create uniform standards for alcohol and drug assessments for people charged with driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (DUI). The bill received positive media coverage again this year and strong bipartisan support but failed to make any progress.

This legislation would track offenders and make sure they're following the rules. Drug and alcohol offenders are often in denial that they have a problem. House Bill 1340 would have allowed for accurate assessments of those people convicted of a DUI and keep repeat offenders off our streets.



Vehicle engine-size tax defeated, for now

I don't think I've ever received more constituent feedback on a single bill than I did on Senate Bill 6900. Almost 1,000 letters and e-mails were sent to me on this one bill. The legislation would penalize people for having a larger vehicle (such as a van or truck) by increasing car tab fees exponentially.



Even though the bill died this year, I would never support this or any bill like it. These are the worst types of taxes because they hit our middle-, low- and fixed-income families the hardest. Families are already struggling to keep up with the rising costs of property taxes, health care, groceries and gas. The idea of the state imposing another enormous tax burden is irresponsible.

Arlington High student job-shadowed Rep. Pearson

Former legislative page and Arlington High School senior, Austin Davis, spent the day shadowing Rep. Kirk Pearson in January.

The now 18 year-old Arlington student served as a legislative page for Pearson when he was in eighth grade and asked if he could return to see the capitol from a legislator's point of view this year.



Student intern Austin Davis spent the day working with Rep. Kirk Pearson to learn about the role and work of state lawmakers.

Representative Kirk Pearson • 39th District

KEEP IN TOUCH

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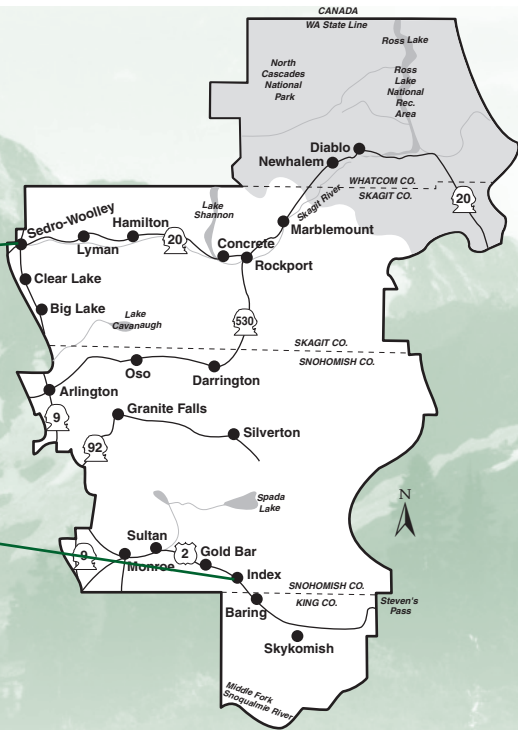
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